

Vol. I, No. 1

January 1979

THE STAR OF THE EAST

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an ecumenical journal dealing
specially with the oriental and
eastern orthodox churches.

P. O. Box 98, Kottayam—686 001, Kerala, India.

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the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

SOPHIA CENTRE, ORTHODOX SEMINARY, P. B. 98,
KOTTAYAM—686 001, KERALA, S. INDIA.

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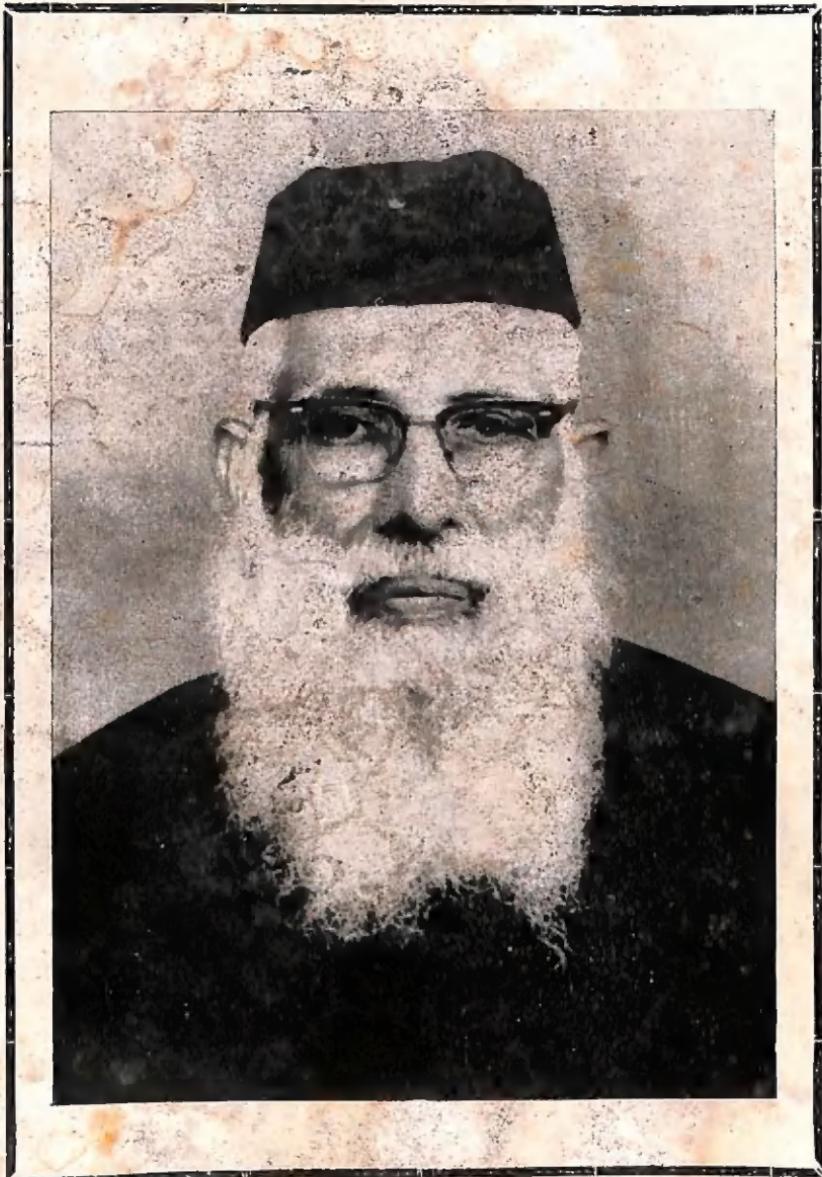
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The late Revd. Dr. C. T. Eapen (1895-1977)

Founded The Star of the East in 1940

This volume is dedicated to his blessed memory.

A Word from the Chief Editor

This Star is certainly not a new one on the eastern horizon. There may be some difference in brightness and sparkle, but it is the same one so lovingly run by the Late Revd. Dr. C. T. Eapen for many years.

Father Eapen has passed on to be with His Lord. He has left his legacy to us, the new editorial board. This first issue under new management is dedicated to Father Eapen's memory and honour.

We do not want at this stage to make any solemn statements about our policy and objectives. These will remain essentially flexible. We conceive ourselves as an ecumenical voice of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, particularly of the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East to which all of us on the Editorial Board belong. As we want our journal to be a voice within the whole Christian Church, we have requested several friends from other churches to serve on our Advisory Board.

We plan for a limited circulation only. The voice should be quiet and modest. We hope to give news as well as views. Not necessarily official views, but views in dialogue with other views. We welcome correspondence from our readers, though we do not promise to publish all letters.

We need the help and support of a wide range of people, friends of our Church—in the form of paid subscriptions, exchange of periodicals, correspondence giving news and views, as well as advice and counsel. We need also your encouragement and constructive criticism.

We offer this issue with great trepidation. We dare to hope that we will be dependably regular. In our present situation and with our limited resources, that is a somewhat bold hope. All Christian hope ought to be bold, is that not so?

Our warm greetings.

Dr. PAULOS GREGORIOS

Late Rev. Dr C. T. Eapen

Rev. Dr. C. T. Eapen was dear and near to so many in India and abroad. He was the man of the East in the 20th century, who persistently followed "the Star of the East." Imprints of his personality could be seen in the various realms of Christian witness. He was a theologian, educationist and writer, and above all, one who loved the Church with patent sincerity.

He was born on 25th Feb. 1895 in the Nellimoottil Chavadiyil family, Adoor. His parents were noble and God-fearing. His father, Thommy Muthalaly set an example to others in his social concern and his mother Aleyamma hailed from the famous Kandathil family in Vallamkulam, Tiruvalla.

After the primary education in Adoor he matriculated from M. G. M. High School, Tiruvalla, scoring high marks. He passed B. Sc., with distinction from Serampore College, W. Bengal. After working for some time as a teacher at M. G. M. High School, Tiruvalla, he proceeded to America where he did an M. A. and a Ph. D. in Education in the Chicago University. On his return from America he visited the Holy Land and was ordained a deacon at Jerusalem by the Syrian Patriarch Mar Aphrem. He had also done his theological education at Serampore about which he rejoiced to recall many pleasant memories up to the very moment of his death.

When he came home from abroad he was reluctant to accept the many positions offered to him. The Malankara Association elected him to the episcopate which also he declined. He wanted to utilize his talents and energy to build up a Residential School with the aim of forming a future generation in the Church with noble character and a life of devout obedience to Christ. He used to tell his friends, "I believe that it will not be a loss at all to spend my whole life for a School." When he happened to visit Sasthamkotta, in old Travancore, he was attracted by a site on the eastern banks of the Sasthamkotta lake. The tranquil atmosphere, the ever blowing cool wind, shimmering blue water around, all these sent him into raptures. There he started the residential school thus fulfilling the great ambition of his life. He was its Principal and Manager as well as Architect. He built it up to the level of an outstanding High School. He devoted a tremendous amount of personal care in helping the character formation of the students. In matters of prayer, fasting,

retreats, confession and communion, he himself set an example before the students. In matters of discipline he was uncompromising, but in the playground he was a pleasant companion to his students. Just before his retirement from School, he was ordained a priest by H. G. Kuriakos Mar Gregorios.

Along with the school responsibilities he was also a member of the Malankara Association Managing Committee and Working Committee. Dr. Eapen was also a Professor for some time at the Orthodox Theological Seminary. He was also member of the Governing Boards of Mount Tabor Dayara (Pathanapuram), Catholicate College, (Pathanamthitta) and of the Inter-Church Relations Committee of the Orthodox Syrian Church. He also served as President of the Boy Scouts Association (Kunnathoor district) and of the Catholic Union of the East. As a parish priest, he endeared himself to many congregations. He represented the Orthodox Syrian Church of India at the second W. C. C. Assembly in Evanston (1954) and the 2nd Vatican Council (1962, observer). He was a source of inspiration to the Student Movement in the Church and was regular in his attendance at its annual conferences. He was also the first General Secretary of the Orthodox Student Conference.

The ecumenical journal 'The Star of the East' was started by him to give information to the various Christian Churches, mainly about the Indian Church of St. Thomas. He struggled valiantly, against great odds, to continue the publication of the journal right till the end of his life. According to Dr. Eapen's will, the continuation of this journal after his death was his heartfelt desire. For the smooth running of it he has entrusted the responsibility to three bishops in the Orthodox Syrian Church viz., H. G. Mathews Mar Coorilos, H. G. Paulos Mar Gregorios and H. G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios. He has also set apart some land with rubber plantation, a building and his entire bank balance for the financial support of the endeavour.

Coming to Dr. Eapen's last phase of life we find him forced to take some rest after a long period of tireless service to God. One evening he slipped and fell on his way back from the Church after evensong in the Holy Week. He sustained a bone fracture which refused to heal perfectly despite treatment at Holy Cross Hospital, Kottiyam, and at the Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottackal. Distinguished Church dignitaries and many friends used to visit him and console him on his sickbed. Dr. Eapen's condition became worse by the end of March 1977. On April 1st 1977 he breathed his last. The next day he was buried at the St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Adoor. H. H. Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I, Catholicos of the East, the Metropolitans, priests and hundreds of people attended his funeral service.

Dr. Eapen has left a legacy, the fruits of his life-long adventure, to the Church. Mar Theodosius Memorial Medical Mission Hospital, Sasthamkotta is established in the five acres of land that Dr. Eapen has donated. The Residential High School, Sasthamkotta, the adjacent land of more than sixty acres, the buildings therein are all handed over to a Trust chaired by H. G. Mathews Mar Coorilos, Metropolitan of Quilon Diocese.

Let us pray that the Lord may grant everlasting peace to his soul. The continuation of this journal is our humble tribute to his memory.

Deacon Jacob Kurien

The Vienna Consultations

Revd. Dr. V. C. Samuel

The ecumenical movement is undoubtedly the greatest event in Christian history during the present century. It seeks to restore the communion of the Churches which had come to be broken on account of various reasons. Among the different expressions of this memorable movement the Vienna Consultations deserve special reckoning.

Started in 1971 through the commendable initiative of the Foundation *Pro Oriente*, there have so far been four meetings in Vienna, Austria. Theologians and some leading churchmen of the Oriental Orthodox Churches were brought together with a number of very eminent theological professors of the Roman Catholic Church for a frank and friendly discussion of the fundamental issues that separate their Churches. The warmth of friendship and cordiality shown to the participants by His Eminence Franciscus Cardinal Koenig, the Metropolitan of Vienna, and the Austrian Church on every occasion of these meetings is indeed unforgettable, and the hospitality and the spirit of dedication expressed by the President, the Secretary General and others concerned of *Pro Oriente*, have been most remarkable. The interest in the work manifested by the President of the Republic of Austria and the Austrian people has been encouraging. The meetings were held in an atmosphere of prayer and worship led by members of each Church and assisted by participants from the others.

A Word about the Churches

The division between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches goes back to the fifth century. Following the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the Christian East became deplorably split into two camps, one accepting and the other rejecting the Council. This state of schism continued in the East without a formal separation of the parties till 536. But the relations between the See of Rome and the anti-Chalcedonian party in the Eastern Church were disrupted, because of Rome's uncompromising clinging to the Council, from that time itself.

The Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Churches which repudiated the Council continued, either side with its own history

since then, to develop theological and liturgical practices, and other aspects of ecclesiastical reality, without any direct reference to the other. Whereas the Roman Catholic Church consistently developed a view of the Papacy from about the fourth century and brought it to culmination in the doctrine of the universal jurisdiction and infallibility of the Bishop of Rome at the I Vatican Council of 1869-70, the Oriental Orthodox Churches continued in their life and service without moving towards centralization. Consequently the unity that binds the latter is not of the same character as that of the former. Besides, on account of the regional freedom which each of them enjoyed, each of them evolved its own liturgical traditions and even details of Church life. They are however united in conserving the fundamental theological and doctrinal formulations of the pre-Chalcedonian Church and remaining more or less within the general ecclesiastical ethos of the ancient Church. Thus Oriental Orthodoxy is not one visible structure in the sense of being a single administrative unit or in maintaining exactly the same traditions in every aspect of Church life, but is a unity in diversity.

The Issues Discussed

Some of the theologians of these two Churches met in Vienna in order to look into the issues that divide their Churches. The two most important points of disagreement between them had reference, on the one hand, to the doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ which the Council of Chalcedon had sought to define, and on the other, to the question of Primacy in the Church. The latter also had relevance to the Council of Chalcedon in an indirect and implicit way.

(a) Christology

Oriental Orthodoxy does not accept the Council of Chalcedon. This is on account as much of the way the Council was conducted, as of the doctrinal standpoint which it adopted. As regards the latter the Council offered a definition of the faith, affirming that Jesus Christ is *one Person* acknowledged *in two Natures*, without either division or separation or change or confusion.⁶⁰ The expression "in two natures", though it was derived from the doctrinal letter, the *Tome*, of Pope Leo of Rome, was unacceptable to many in the East. On this account, as also on the ground that the Council was not conducted in keeping with the already established norms in the Church, they opposed it. Neither persuasion nor force and persecution would make them give up their opposition. The result was a division in the Church, not only between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, but also between the latter and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The first three Vienna Consultations discussed this subject from various angles. The procedural anomalies attributable to the Council were seen to be well-founded. As for the doctrinal emphases, the participants concentrated on three points.

One : a correct understanding of each other's position.

The teaching of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, for instance, that Jesus Christ is not to be confessed as existing "in two natures", but only that "from two natures" he is "one incarnate nature of God the Word,"* had once been taken by Roman Catholic theologians in general as sufficient ground for regarding these Churches as holding to the monophysite heresy. Is not, they would argue, the one nature the nature of God the Word who became incarnate in Jesus Christ? What then about the human nature which signifies the other? Does this not imply a denial of Christ's humanity? The plausibility of the question may be granted. But the fact is that the Oriental Orthodox Churches have never understood the "one nature" formula in this way; they employ it on the other hand to affirm the indissoluble unity of Christ without reservation. Jesus Christ is, for these Churches, one Son and Lord, the same being composed of the two natures of Godhead and manhood, and therefore perfect God and perfect man. He who is consubstantial with the Father in eternity has become unchangeably and indivisibly consubstantial with us in the incarnation. As for the human nature, it is conserved by the word "incarnate." The "one nature", for instance, is the incarnate nature of God the Word. Jesus Christ is God the Son or God the Word in his incarnate state, so that the fulness of the humanity is affirmed without any denial or reduction whatsoever.

Similarly, the "in two natures" of the Council of Chalcedon which the Roman Catholic Church adopts as basic is looked upon by the Oriental Orthodox Churches as an attempt to bring in through the backdoor, as it were, the "Nestorian" division which the Council of Ephesus had excluded in 431. Here also, the discussion showed that the Roman Catholic Church understands the phrase differently. This Church, for instance, sees in it the emphasis that Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect man. The unity of Christ is conserved by the Roman Catholic Church by the affirmation of his double consubstantiality and the unity of his person. The two Church traditions, then, conserve the doctrinal heritage of the pre-Chalcedonian Church unreservedly by means of their respective terminologies.

Accordingly the participants stated in their agreed communique that the "one incarnate nature of God the Word does not deny but rather express the full and perfect humanity of Christ," and that

* This is a phrase which St. Cyril of Alexandria had made central in his theological interpretation with reference to the person of Jesus Christ in the fifth century, which the Oriental Orthodox Churches consider very basic.

the definition of the Council of Chalcedon, rightly understood today, affirms the unity of person and the indissoluble union of Godhead and Manhood in Christ despite the phrase "in two natures."

Two : the need for further clarifying ancient formulations.

The participants were in agreement that the Christological formulations offered in ancient times are not sufficiently clear in terms of meaning and that the mystery of Christ has to be interpreted in relation to contemporary life and its problems. In this respect the meaning of Greek terms like *hypostasis* and *physis*, usually translated as person and nature, in the Trinitarian and Christological formulations, needs to be clarified. Again, the question remains whether it is simply human nature that Christ as man holds, and if it is, can he have lived a concrete human life in our world? As regards the second point, the consultations did further express the concern that our faith in Jesus Christ should be reinterpreted together "in relation to problems that confront man today; the disunity of mankind, the presence of poverty and injustice, attitudes towards people of other religions, races and cultures, towards unbelievers and despisers of the Church, and towards all those for whom it has become increasingly difficult to enter into the world of faith."

Three : the question of ecclesiastical condemnations.

The division of the Church following the Council of Chalcedon resulted in each side condemning the other as heretical. The leading personalities on either side also came thus to be anathematized by the other, not only in formal declarations of faith, but also in liturgical celebrations. The participants were agreed that this habit should change, and that the Churches should be requested to take official action in this matter. They expressed the opinion that without insisting on an acceptance by either side as fathers and teachers those whom it has formally condemned, or on a formal lifting of the anathemas, the Churches should simply "drop from the liturgical corpus anathemas of saints and teachers of the other side, as some Churches have already begun to do."

In this way, the first three Vienna Consultations succeeded in arriving at agreed recommendations, unofficial though they still remain, that are very definitely positive and contemporary on a doctrinal issue that has separated the Churches for over fifteen long centuries.

(b) Primacy in the Church

The second major issue that has led to the separation of the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches is the insistence by the former on the special place of the Bishop of Rome, on the ground that he occupies the Petrine office. Though the doctrine of the universal jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome and papal infallibility have been officially adopted by the Roman Catholic Church only in 1870 following the I Vatican Council, its history can be traced back to pre-Chalcedonian times. At Chalcedon itself Rome's point of view in this regard was consistently pressed by the legates of the Bishop of Rome. In fact, some of the anti-Chalcedonian polemical writings that have come down to us from ancient times show a clear awareness of this story about the Council on the part of their authors.

The fourth Vienna Consultation held from 10 to 18 September 1978 took up this subject as its main theme. As a related issue the Consultation did also discuss the question of the Oriental rite Catholic Churches. Though at one time the Roman Catholic Church could, in the light of its universalist claims, justify the formation and continued existence of these Churches, with the new approach to the historic Churches of the East which it adopted since the II Vatican Council, the situation has now changed. The Vienna Consultation thought it fitting that this subject should therefore be included in its agenda.

On the question of primacy, as it concerns the Roman Catholic Church, the central issue is the Petrine office which is declared to be vested in the Bishop of Rome. The doctrines of papal infallibility and the universal jurisdiction of the Pope are derived from it. The Oriental Orthodox Churches do not maintain any of these positions in the same way as the Roman Catholic Church does. In its official Communiqué the Vienna Consultation showed that "primacy, conciliarity and the consensus of the believing community" are the three elements "integrally related to each other" in the Church. The relative importance of these elements has however been "differently understood in different situations." Regarding the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, two positions clarified by the Roman Catholic participants deserve mentioning here. Professor Dr. Wilhelm de Vries, S. J., of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, observed that very few Roman Catholic scholars, if at all, today believe that the Apostle Peter was the first Pope. Before the fourth century there was in fact no concept of *ius divinum* with reference to Peter as Pope. Primacy can be seen developing from the fourth century, and Leo I in the fifth century stated it categorically. However, he added, the development in this way had the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that it cannot be dismissed or ignored. Another important emphasis made by the Roman Catholic participants was to the effect

that the Pope should not be viewed as occupying a position *sui generis* above and beyond the episcopate and the believing community. It is not that he, remaining above, guides the Church, and that all others occupy only a passive role of being guided by him. The same point was admitted by all participants with reference to the episcopate as well. The guiding work of the Church does not rest exclusively with the bishops either individually or collectively. On the other hand, it was acknowledged that every member of the believing community is a living stone, filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit and being built up in the divine Temple of God's Church. The primate and the bishops in cooperation with the priests are in the one Church, in which no member is unimportant or negligible.

As for infallibility, which really means dependable teaching authority, the participants affirmed that it is to the whole Church, "as the Body of Christ and abode of the Holy Spirit," that it belongs. None of the different organs in the Church is without its own dynamic role to play in expressing it. There was, however, no complete agreement as to their relative importance in fulfilling this great task.

The Consultation noted that primacy is practiced in one form or another both by the Roman Catholic Church and by the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The difference between them lies in the fact that the former regards the "primacy of the Bishop of Rome.. as of universal scope", but in the Oriental Orthodox Churches there was only regional primacy. In course of time, however, these have "exercised and continue to exercise primatial jurisdiction also over a national diaspora widespread in many continents of the world." The fact that each of these traditions believes that it has been and is being guided by the Holy Spirit was admitted by the participants in unison. Primacy as such is not therefore a matter of dispute between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The point of disagreement between them consists in the former's basing of it in the Petrine office and the latter's reservation regarding it. However, it was agreed that "in the light of the newly emerging global perspectives and pluralistic tendencies in the world community" the Churches should "undertake afresh a common theological reflection on primacy with a new vision of our future unity."

With reference to the Oriental Rite Catholic Churches, the Consultation recalled 'the principles of Vatican II and subsequent statements of the See of Rome' that these should not be used as "a device for bringing Oriental Orthodox Churches inside the Roman Communion." They should, on the other hand, help in the restoration of "eucharistic communion among the sister Churches."

Concluding Observations

The Vienna Consultations have taken the first step in bringing the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches to seek their lost unity within the context of the ecumenical movement. The two major issues that have led these Churches to maintain separate existence in the past were discussed frankly by some of the competent persons on either side on the basis of scholarly papers presented by them. They did, in fact, take up the subjects for treatment not merely in their past historical perspective, but did seek to relate them to contemporary life and problems, leaving sufficient room for facing the future by the Churches together. A very brief summary of the salient points in their findings is noted in this paper.

What has thus been done by the four meetings so far held stands in need of official evaluation by the Churches. The third and the fourth Consultations have, as a matter of fact, included in their communiques a request to the Churches that this action be taken by them. It is hoped that the Churches will find the work so far accomplished by the Consultations significant enough for their official evaluation, leading to further action by them.

In conclusion I should like to place on record my most sincere and hearty personal appreciation to His Eminence Franciscus Cardinal Koenig, the Foundation Pro Oriente, particularly to its President Dr. Theodor Piffl-Percevic and to Secretary General D. Kfm. Alfred Stirnemann, and the Austrian Church and people for the wonderful hospitality and warmth of friendship extended by them unreservedly to all the participants and to me during these meetings. I pray that God may use them as a tool for the carrying out of His saving purposes.

Ecumenical Priorities: an Oriental Orthodox Looks at the Ecumenical Movement Today

(Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios)

Several of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, especially those of India and Ethiopia, are founder-members of the World Council of Churches. All five of them, i.e., the Egyptian, the Syrian, the Armenian, the Indian and the Ethiopian Orthodox Churches are now members of the W. C. C. The Indian Orthodox Church has taken an active part in the Ecumenical movement ever since 1930. In general the Oriental Orthodox had accumulated a good deal of ecumenical experience already by the time Pope John of blessed memory opened the doors and windows of the Roman Catholic Church to let in the ecumenical wind.

The time has now come for the Oriental Orthodox to assess the ecumenical experience and to draw up a fresh priority list of ecumenical concerns. It was done before in 1965 at the Addis Ababa Conference of the Heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches. Have the priorities changed since then?

It was clear in 1965, that the first priority for the Oriental Orthodox was to restore communion with the Byzantine Orthodox Churches. The four unofficial conversations, i.e., Aarhus (1964), Bristol (1967), Geneva (1970) and Addis Ababa (1971) have now confirmed this basic insight of Addis Ababa. The differences are hardly theological. There are problems like acceptance of certain councils, anathemas against saints and fathers of the other side, and the rank of patriarchs; but none of these really constitute a substantial difference in faith. This relation remains the first ecumenical priority for the Oriental Orthodox. Whether it is also similarly a first priority for the Byzantine Orthodox can be seen clearly only after the next Byzantine Orthodox Synod.

The second priority at Addis Ababa was relations with the Roman Catholic Church, and the third relations with the Protestant Churches. This pattern remains basically unaltered. What has become clearer is that the first of these two relations cannot be conducted and developed through the medium of the World Council

of Churches. The World Council of Churches has been useful in the past in developing the relations between the Oriental Orthodox and the Byzantine Orthodox. But that stage is now over. Whatever relations are developed will now have to be worked out bilaterally between the two families of Churches at an official level. For this the W. C. C. can be only of limited use.

This leads to the conclusion that membership in the W. C. C. for the Oriental Orthodox Churches is mainly for the purpose of maintaining relations with the Protestant Churches. There is a great deal of discussion in Orthodox circles whether *membership* is actually necessary for maintaining these relations. The W. C. C. as a body which coordinates the work of the Protestant Churches will remain an important element in the ecumenical movement, and the Orthodox Churches, both Oriental and Byzantine, will have to continue in formal membership of the W. C. C., so that the Council can continue to be regarded as something more than merely a pan-Protestant organization. At least that is the present position of most Oriental and Byzantine Orthodox who are ecumenically minded and experienced. To withdraw from membership of the W. C. C. will serve no useful purpose, and will offend the Protestant Churches.

What really emerges as new from the last twentyfive years or more of ecumenical experience and participation is the possibility of a closer relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the two families of Orthodox Churches. This possibility is such a surprisingly new development in the ecumenical movement of our century that ecumenists are beginning to talk about a new structure to give more body to this new phenomenon and develop it as a high priority.

The Orthodox Churches are now sufficiently clear that no dramatic new developments are to be expected in Orthodox-Protestant relations. The possibilities have been explored. The ecclesiological difference is too great to be easily overcome by verbal formulae. The best we can hope for is a continuation of cooperation and conversation, especially in the field of service to the world, and on the issues that confront humanity as a whole.

But between the three families of Roman Catholic, Byzantine Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches there has emerged recently such common ground ecclesiologically, that some form or structure has to be devised to make the common ground both visible and a platform for further work.

For the Oriental Orthodox, till recently, relations with Roman Catholics was only a *second* priority. But the initiative of an unofficial body like *Pro Oriente* in Vienna has made enormous

advance possible in Orthodox-Roman Catholic relations. What began with the participation of Orthodox observers at the Second Vatican Council has now developed into a large network of bilateral and multilateral conversations between Roman Catholics and Orthodox.

On the Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic level, we have now had four major unofficial conversations, all organized under the aegis of Pro Oriente, Vienna. The leadership given by Cardinal Koenig of Vienna has been surprisingly productive. Many points on which there seemed to be misunderstandings have now been cleared. It has the following achievements :

- (a) Three very rich reports published in *Wort und Wahrheit*, a Vienna publication, and the fourth is soon due.
- (b) Joint statements between Heads of Churches indicating a wide area of agreement—His Holiness the late Pope Paul VI issued such statements with both His Holiness Pope Shenooda of the Coptic Church and His Holiness Patriarch Ignatius Yaqub of the Syrian Church, as also with the Armenian Catholicos, His Holiness Vazgen I.
- (c) The reports of the four unofficial conversations have now been forwarded to the Roman Catholic authorities as well as to the Heads of all the Oriental Churches by his Eminence Cardinal Koenig of Vienna. Official evaluation and action by the Churches may soon ensue.

None of these achievements mean that all the problems have been ironed out. The Communiqué of the Fourth Conversation (see elsewhere in this issue) clearly shows that apart from Filioque, Dogmas of Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility, and even some Christological differences, the fundamental problem of papal jurisdiction and authority has not yet found a solution.

* * * *

But the interesting element is the clearing away of many misunderstandings on both sides and the emerging of a substantial consensus in Trinitarian, Christological, and Ecclesiological understandings. Of course, there may emerge new differences if and when Pneumatology or the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit is discussed at greater depth. But what has so far emerged is an astonishingly broad area of consensus. Even more surprising is the fact that, though Byzantine Orthodox/Roman Catholic Conversations have not yet advanced very far, the broad area of consensus is more than likely to be shared by our Orthodox brethren of the Constantinople

family as well. Whether this consensus would be similarly shared by the Churches of the Reformation is at best doubtful. Past experience shows that there can be only a limited amount of understanding between Orthodox and Protestant on questions of ecclesiology, of the ministry, and of the nature of the sacramental mysteries of the Church (despite some agreement on Baptism and Eucharist). The Orthodox find often that there are certain ecclesiological experiences that cannot be deeply shared with many of their Protestant brothers and Sisters. (eg. Ordination, Chrismation etc.)

The question is: has the time come to give some kind of organizational structure to this emerging consensus among the Roman Catholics, the Constantinople Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox theologians ?

Only a very modest structure should be conceived at present. The three main families could propose at this juncture an exploratory committee—consisting of some 12 bishops, 12 theologians and 12 men and women from various vocations in life. (I know that the leadership of all three families are not overly enthusiastic about lay, women's or youth participation in ecumenical leadership but they are just as much members of the body of Christ as Bishops and Priests, and bring to the discussion a dimension which Bishops and Priests are sometimes likely to overlook). Such an exploratory Committee could then have an agenda such as :

- (a) the objectives of the new venture;
- (b) the structure and name of any organization or body to be set up jointly by the three families ;
- (c) how it is to be financed;
- (d) the representational pattern for each Church;
- (e) the activities to be carried out immediately;
- (f) an office and headquarters as well as administrative structure ;
- (g) relations with other bodies—eg. i) with the Synod of the Roman Catholic Church, with the Pan-Orthodox Synod, and with the Standing Committee of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, ii) with the World Council of Churches and with Protestant Confessional bodies.

Such a common body will seek :

- (a) to put primary emphasis on sustained and deep prayer for unity; it will give the highest priority to an ecumenical ministry of prayer; continuous, structured, disciplined prayer, trustfully seeking renewal and unity.

- (b) to enter deeply into the heritage of each other, to learn from each other, and to help the people and the Churches to understand and love each other;
- (c) to organize study and common reflection on the problems that need to be resolved on the way to unity, and helping the Churches to take necessary actions at all levels;
- (d) to generate programmes of service to humanity in which the Churches cooperate with personnel and resources as well as imaginative ideas;
- (e) to give visible expression to the unity that exists between the three families, and to celebrate that unity in a manner that draws more people into the search for greater unity;
- (f) to have trouble-shooting committees or bodies that can help resolve internal disputes within or among the participating churches.

What is needed now is :

- (a) an expression of interest on the part of all Churches in this proposal;
- (b) heads of Churches writings to each other and finding a way to set up an exploratory committee.

If it is God's will, and only if it is, can we make some progress thus on the Ecumenical Way.

Metropolitan Nikodim and Pope John Paul I

The first day after the late Pope John Paul I was installed he spent in receiving State dignitaries. The second day, i. e. on Tuesday, September 5th, he began his day by receiving ecumenical guests, among whom I was privileged to be present.

We were representatives of the various Orthodox Churches and world confessional bodies. The understanding was that we would each have a private audience with Pope John Paul I, lasting about 5 minutes in each case, and that afterwards His Holiness would address us as a group.

The first to be presented was Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad and Novgorod, one of the Presidents of the World Council of Churches, to be followed by representatives of other Orthodox Churches including myself.

As the rest of us waited in the ante-room the minutes went by. We were wondering what had happened. Then we saw the Archimandrite who had accompanied the Metropolitan being called, and he rushed in with the medicine-box. Soon afterwards we saw a doctor and his assistant coming in. We guessed that Metropolitan Nikodim was having a heart attack. But only later we found out what had happened.

As soon as Metropolitan Nikodim had entered the Papal office and had exchanged the preliminary greetings, he was asked to take a seat. He sat on a sofa while the Pope sat on a chair. Cardinal Willebrands, President of the Secretariat for Unity was also present.

The Metropolitan had not been seated for a whole minute, when he simply fell and滑ed down the sofa. Immediately the Pope and the Cardinal laid him out on the floor and sent for assistance. The doctors came fairly promptly, but the attack was his sixth, and this time massive.

The Pope and the Cardinal said the requiem prayers on behalf of the defunct. The body was removed to the Papal library next door. Then the Pope received us.

He was still trying to smile. He said to me "We should work together for unity." We had a pleasant conversation. Yet it was obvious that Pope John Paul I had been deeply moved by what had happened a few minutes before. His first major ecclesiastical reception after installation was for the representatives of sister churches. The first to be so received was the representative of the second largest Church in the world, (present estimate—70 million).

There was not much love lost between the two churches. Rome in the minds of the Russians and others, was a central symbol of the west. And for most westerners, Russia was a symbol of the "enemy." Reconciliation between the two churches was problematic.

And yet Metropolitan Nikodim, who had attacks even after he came to Rome, ventured to risk his life, because he felt the meeting with the Pope could be important. And I suspect that it would have been important, if John Paul I had lived on.

But that was not to be. John Paul I, the Pope of love and friendliness, is gone beyond the screen. So is Nikodim, the great ecumenical pioneer. The invisible cloud grows.

And God's saving and uniting work goes on.

PAUL GREGORIOS

News and Views

Romanian Patriarch Speeds Production of Religious Literature Bucharest (EPS)

Patriarch Justin of the Romanian Orthodox Church has initiated a project to publish a collection of 90 volumes of patristic texts covering the first eight centuries of Christian history. This venture was termed by a spokesman of this second largest Orthodox Church in the world as "the most ambitious project undertaken by Patriarch Justin following his election to head the Church in June 1977.

Patriarch Justin who is himself a New Testament and Greek scholar intends to reorient theological research towards the sources of the Holy Tradition both eastern and western. In addition a new Handbook of Dogmatics in three volumes is already well advanced. It is being prepared by the Romanian theologian Prof. Dimitru Staniloae.

Serbian Orthodox Church Asks More Religious Freedom Belgrade (EPS)

The Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church has asked the authorities of Serbia, one of the Yugoslavian Republics, for more freedom, reports the Catholic Press Agency KIPA. This request, which was signed by Patriarch German and two bishops, includes ten points asking for a change in the public authorities' attitude towards the Church.

They ask that: municipal authorities refrain from interfering in religious matters, children who get religious education should not be discriminated against; news media should stop making fun of christian believers and not treat them as second class citizens. The document also requests that funerals be celebrated according to the wish of faithful. The question was also raised of a possible restitution of church property confiscated by the Government; and social security benefits for teachers in theological establishments.

Asian Theologians meet in Sri Lanka

An Asian Theological Conference was held in Sri Lanka from Jan. 7 to 20, 1979, on the 'Asia's Struggle For Full Humanity'. It was sponsored by the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) founded at the termination of the first ecumenical dialogue of Third World Theologians at Dar-es-Salam in Tanzania in August 1976.

A world consultation of Third World theologians with theologians from the First and Second World is to be held in 1980, after the three continental meetings in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

New Leadership for the CPC

Prague (EPS): The Fifth Assembly of the Christian Peace Conference (CPC) was held last June in Prague, Czechoslovakia. The 600 participants from 84 countries took a clear stand against various forms of injustice and oppression. The participants reaffirmed the right of all to express their conscience in a responsible and creative way. Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios delivered a major address on economic issues.

During the assembly the 445 voting delegates unanimously elected the Hungarian Reformed Bishop Dr. Karoly Toth as the President of the CPC, in the vacancy created by the resignation of Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad and Novgorod, on grounds of ill health. The Rev. Lubemir Mirojovsky (Czechoslovakia) is the new General Secretary.

1700 Year Old N. T. Manuscript found in remote Sinai Monastery

Greek Orthodox monks in Israel have recently reported a two-year-old discovery of 1700 year old manuscripts of a Greek version of the N. T. at the monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai. This ancient manuscript is believed by scholars to form part of the fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus, other parts of which are kept in the British Museum, London. Biblical scholars are excited over the news; some of them believe the repercussions could be as momentous as those of the discovery some years ago of the 'Dead Sea Scrolls.' Hesitation to make discovery known was due to the desire by the monks to preserve their seclusion, protect their scholarly rights and avoid political complications.

Patriarch Pimen demands ■■■ Orthodox participation in WCC

His Holiness Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church has suggested that the Orthodox presence in the World Council seems still insufficient. In a letter to the Central Committee of the WCC he said that the sought-for unity and organic advance of Christianity is possible only with permanent, wide and authoritative Orthodox witness.

To this end it has been suggested that the statutes of the WCC should secure more representation of the local Orthodox Churches in all the organs and staff of the World Council. Also that proper reflection of Orthodox position be ensured by the involvement of Orthodox representatives as speakers, advisors, experts, whenever doctrinal problems and questions of church order are discussed at the WCC or when documents on such problems are worked out.

The voting system used in the WCC when doctrinal problems are being decided upon wants improvement, the message continued. Also it is considered important that the WCC pay more attention to informing its non-Orthodox member churches about the foundations of faith and order of the Orthodox Church. This purpose, the message said, could be served by appropriate seminars, publications and dissemination of works on history, theology, liturgies and other sides of the life of Orthodoxy.

WCC Plans World Youth Conference for 1981

The Central Committee of W. C. C. met in Jamaica, have agreed to hold a major World Youth Conference in 1981. Staff were authorised to seek the necessary funds for the event but the Central Committee also committed itself to assist in obtaining such finances.

It is estimated that US \$650,000 will be needed for the conference.

The Central Committee felt that there is a deep need to expose a new generation of young people to the ecumenical vision and that it is essential that the WCC show bold and challenging endeavours to the youth within the WCC, the member churches and their local churches (EPS).

WCC Prepares for the Sixth Assembly

The Central Committee of WCC decided to convene the Sixth General Assembly in Vancouver in 1983. No new programmes will be initiated by the WCC between now and the Sixth Assembly. Present programmes are to be brought to a "fruitful conclusion as far as possible in 1981," when all efforts of the organisation will be concentrated on preparations for the next assembly.

The Central Committee also ruled that commissions and working groups should meet only twice between 1979-81 and they should not meet in 1982 in view of the need for Assembly preparations.

At the same time, the Central Committee urged that a policy be developed to enable staff and ecumenical teams to visit as many member churches as possible in the period between now and 1983. This should include a common agenda for consultations with member churches.

Regional meetings are to be planned, with at least one in each region, to be attended by delegates to the 1983 assembly, members of the Central Committee and of commissions and working groups from a given region, and church leaders and representation of regional ecumenical bodies.

In other actions the Central Committee decided that specific priorities must be developed for the extensive committee meeting in

September this year which will take into account the need to reduce the total expense budget in 1980 and 1981 by about three million francs in each year. (EPS)

Patriarch Ilia, the New President of WCC (EPS)

His Holiness Ilia, Patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church, in the Soviet Union, has been elected by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches to fill the vacancy in the Council's Presidential ranks left by the death of H. E. Metropolitan Nikodim. The WCC has six presidents.

Patriarch Ilia, who is ■ Georgian in his mid 40-s, studied Theology at the Theological Academy of Moscow, and has been responsible for special studies on the monasticism of Mount Athos in Greece.

After Theology School, he was made Director of the Theological Seminary of the Georgian Orthodox Church, then later became Bishop of Sukhumi. He was elected Catholicos-Patriarch of the Church of Georgia at the end of 1977, one of the youngest prelates to be elected to that high office.

The Church of Georgia, of which he is head, is one of the oldest in christendom, having been founded in the early first century when, through the missionary activities of the female Saint Nino, the then king of Georgia was converted to Christianity. The Georgian Church played a special role in the development of monasticism, and the heyday of its history was in the 12th and 13th centuries under the dynamic King David and Queen Thamar.

Patriarch Ilia has participated in the Ecumenical Movement since 1968, and is very familiar with the work of WCC. From 1968 to 1975 he was a member of the working group on Church and the Society. His Holiness also visited the Indian Orthodox Church some years ago.

Metropolitan Antony succeeds Metropolitan Nikodim

Metropolitan Antony of Minsk has been appointed Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, succeeding Metropolitan Nikodim who died last September. Metropolitan Antony was ordained in 1950, and has been the head of the diocese of Minsk and Byelorussia since 1965. He is one of the best known leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church, and has taken part in many ecumenical meetings. He has also visited the Orthodox Church in India as the head of delegation when he was Archbishop of Minsk.

60th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate

The Orthodox Church of Russia celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate from 25th to 29th of

May 1978. Hierarchs, representatives of the clergy and laity from the national and foreign dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church, representatives from all Russian monasteries and convents and theological seminaries participated in the colourful festival.

More than forty delegations attended the functions. The delegations from the Orthodox Churches of Georgia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland and Japan were led by their Primates. Representatives from the other Orthodox Churches, Heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches of America and Ethiopia, representatives from the Orthodox Syrian Church of India, Roman Catholic Church, Anglican, Old Catholic Churches also participated in the celebrations.

His Holiness Baselius Marthoma Mathews I the Catholicos of the Orthodox Church of India sent a message to His Holiness Patriarch Pimen, and the send ■ delegation headed by Metropolitan Philipose Mar Theophilos of Ankamaly. The other members of the Indian Orthodox delegation were Hieromonk Dr. N. J. Thomas and Revd. Fr. Mathai Nooranal.

The Orthodox Church in Rehabilitation work in Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh, one of the southern states of India was hit by tidal wave and cyclone in November 1977. Tens of thousands of human beings were killed. Hundreds of thousands of people were left derelict, homeless, stunned by the torrent that swept their belongings away along with their loved ones.

Many voluntary agencies, both christian and non-christian—are engaged in the Relief and Rehabilitation work in the cyclone hit area. Soon after the catastrophe, H. H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews I Catholicos of the East, sent a modest sum of Rs. 5000/- to the State Government of Andhra Pradesh. And he initiated the formation of a committee to collect the funds from the Church Members for the Relief and Rehabilitation Operations. His Holiness sent circulars to parish churches to raise their share for the fund. The Holy Episcopal Synod authorised H. G. Gheevarghese Mar Osthathios Metropolitan of Niranam to collect the fund and to give leadership in the operations in Andhra Pradesh. The committee set a target of Rs. 700,000. The church members enthusiastically responded to the appeal. Rs. 500,000 was collected within a few months. Gifts are still coming in.

The Malankara Orthodox Church has adopted two villages in Krishna District in Andhra Pradesh for the total rehabilitation. The work in the first village has already started. The future plan includes community development activities in more villages.

Five more Bishops in the Orthodox Church of India

The Holy Episcopal Synod of the Orthodox Church of India consecrated five new bishops on 15th May 1978. His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews I, Catholicos of the East presided over the six hour long services. The new bishops are Yacob Mar Policarplos (Coadjutor bishop of Cochin), Geevarghese Mar Dioscorus (Metropolitan of Trivandrum), Zacharias Mar Dionysius (Metropolitan of Madras), Mathews Mar Barnabas (Coadjutor bishop of Bombay and Ankamaly), and Yuhanon Mar Athanasius (Coadjutor bishop of Kottayam).

Now the Orthodox Church of India has 17 bishops including H. H. the Catholicos. The total number of dioceses is 14.

Fourth Vienna Consultations

The fourth (unofficial) Vienna consultation between theologians of the Roman Catholic Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches was held from the 10th to the 18th September 1978 at Vienna, in Austria. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios, Revd. Dr. V. C. Samuel and Revd. Dr. K. M. George represented the Orthodox Church of India. The main topics at the consultations were "Primacy and Authority in Church" and "Role of the Uniate Churches in today's ecumenical situation."

Orthodox Theological Teachers met at Basel

A world consultation of the Orthodox Theological teachers was convened at Basel, Switzerland in May, 1978, under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. Fr. T. J. Joshua, Professor of New Testament represented the Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam. The consultation discussed the Orthodox response to the various issues that confront theological education today.

Prof. Moltman and Prof. Koch Visited Orthodox Theological Seminary

Prof. Jurgen Moltman, of Tübingen University spent a week in the Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam, in September 1978 lecturing to the students on.

1. The Diaconal Church in the light of the Kingdom of God.
2. The Trinitarian History of God.
3. Christian Faith and Human Rights.

Prof. Klaus Koch of Hamburg University gave two lectures in the Orthodox Seminary in October 1978. The subjects for lectures were "Form Critical Method" and "Social Critique in the Prophets."

Two Orthodox Church Members got distinctions in Serampore University Examinations

Revd. Jacob Kurien a deacon of the Orthodox Church of India has secured First Rank and first class in the M. Th (Theology) Examination of the Senate of Serampore held in 1978. He did his M. Th at United Theological College, Bangalore. Rev. Jacob Kurian got his M. A. degree in Hindu Philosophy with First Rank and in the First Class from Banaras Hindu University in 1976. He has been appointed as lecturer in Religion in the Orthodox Theological Seminary.

Deacon Baby Varghese a student of the Orthodox Seminary has secured first rank and first class in the B. D. Comprehensive Examination of the Senate of Serampore in 1978. Moreover he got two all India first prizes in Theology and in Religion. He is presently serving as a full time secretary for the Andhra Pradesh Relief and Rehabilitation Programme of the Orthodox Church and also as the Business Manager of "The Star of the East."

Patriarch can count on a following in Kerala, the Catholicos whom he has appointed can look after them as a Maphrian. If the two dignitaries can reach an agreement admitting this factual situation, the unpleasant relationship between them can be transcended.

Book Review Article

The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar

By Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal, Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies, Rome, Second Edition, July 1977

This is a book by a Roman Catholic scholar whose studies in the field have led him to offer a very positive evaluation of the juridical status of the Catholicos of Malabar. In offering it, the learned author discusses the origin of the Catholicos of Seleucia and the Maphrian of Tagrith, offers a brief account of the historical development of the 'Jacobite' Church of Malabar which "separated itself from the Latin administration" imposed on the Church of Malabar by the synod of Diamper in 1599, deals with the way the institution of the Catholicate was established in 1912 and how it adopted a significant Constitution in 1934 which formally incorporated certain amendments in later times, shows how the juridical validity of the Catholicos and the Constitution was admitted by the Supreme Court of India in 1958 and acknowledged by the Antiochene Syrian Patriarch in the same year, and refers to the latest moves initiated by the Patriarch, in spite of what he had done in 1958, to bring this office under his direct control.

In evaluating the status of the Catholicos of Malabar Dr. Urumpackal adopts the Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology as his basis. According to it there is no supreme head for the universal Church within the historical realm, and this standpoint is admitted by both the 'Jacobite' Church of Malabar and the 'Jacobite' Church under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch. On this ground the Church of Malabar has the right to declare itself a Patriarchate, on a par with the Antiochene or any other Patriarchate. With special reference to the Antiochene Syrian Patriarch, who in fact is the head of a sister-Church, it should be insisted that he has no legitimate basis to interfere in the affairs of the Malabar Church. His claim therefore that he excommunicated the Catholicos of Malabar and the hierarchy in his fellowship has no cogency. On the other hand, the consecration of bishops by the Patriarch for the Malabar Church without a formal request for the same from this Church is a totally unwarranted action, and the elevation of a Catholicos who acknowledges his supremacy under pretext of replacing the Catholicos of Malabar is a clear violation of the Constitution which he himself had approved in 1958. However, grants the author, since the

The author shows refreshingly that the Catholicos of Seleucia and the Maphrian of Tagrith are two ecclesiastical dignitaries. The former came into being in consequence of a natural evolution in the Persian Church during the episcopacy of Papa bar Aggai late in the third and early in the fourth centuries, but the latter (who also is sometimes called 'Catholicos') was the creation of the Antiochene Syrian Church, either in the sixth or more possibly in the seventh century. This difference, notes the author, is not recognized by the Constitution of the Church of Malabar. In spite of it, the status assigned there to the Catholicos is equal to that of the Catholicos of Seleucia or of the Patriarch of Antioch himself. We may observe here that the point made by Dr. Urumpackal is not unrecognized in the Church of Malabar. The present reviewer, for example, has clarified it in a number of his articles published in *Church Weekly*, Kottayam, from about 1950 (see specially the paper on താമസ്യവ്യാസിക്കാഡമി അനീസൻ ചില അവകാശവാദങ്ങളും from 9 May 1976 to 18 July 1976), and in some of his other writings (see മത രാജ്യ തന്ത്രം എന്നും ? 1975, distributed by C. L. S., Tiruvalla, and the chapter on മലകരാജാവ്യാസം ബന്ധം in മരുപ്പതാം നൂറാഞ്ചിലും മലബാർ, ed. by Fr. T. G. Zachariah and Mr. K. V. Mammil, Kottayam).

While discussing the book of Dr. Urumpackal, we should be reminded of the fact that the Church of Malabar has a history of its own, and that it should not be thought of as forming a part of any Church in the world, whether Eastern or Western. Although historical circumstances have led it to come under the influence and/or administration of Churches elsewhere, it had a desire for maintaining its autonomous and even autocephalous character. It is this desire that a section of this ancient Christian community expressed unambiguously in throwing off the "Latin administration" and with it the papal jurisdiction in the seventeenth century and took steps to regain its pre-Portuguese character and identity. That is the Church of Malabar under the spiritual leadership of Catholicos. It is indeed gratifying that a scholar belonging to the great Roman Catholic Communion, though he does not admit all the implications of this position himself, does defend it on the basis of the Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology and acknowledge the juridical legitimacy of the Catholicos of Malabar. Insofar as this basic thesis goes, Dr. Urumpackal's book deserves every praise.

There are, however, a number of points on which questions have to be raised about the author's findings. (1) Dr. Urumpackal's

position that Seleucia had a "hierarchical or juridical relationship" with Antioch, however, "vague and tenuous" or even if "very weak and non-existent" it may have been, has difficulties and it is not accepted by all scholars in the field. This reviewer has shown its unlikeness in his *Church Weekly* articles already noted. The authorities cited by him seem to be reading a juridical theory developed in later times into the third century. (2) In dealing with the institution of the Maphrian, the author should have noted the fact that the Antiochene Syrian Church looked upon it as a step intended to replace the Catholicos of Seleucia who had become a Nestorian. It is this reading of the status of the Maphrian that the Church of Malabar accepts. In other words, by the expression "Catholicos of the East" the Church of Malabar does not admit any idea of subordination to the Patriarch. (3) The author's reference to the Church of Malabar as 'Jacobite', 'Monophysite' and 'Puthenkor' should have been avoided, as they do not help the author in working out his thesis. The fact that these terms have been used is to be viewed along with their rejection by the Church of Malabar presided over by the Catholicos. As for the terms 'Jacobite' and 'Monophysite', see *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined* by the present reviewer, C. L. S., 1977, Madras. (4) The remark of the author and the authorities on whom he relies that the Church of Malabar did not have valid episcopacy from the time of the Oath of Koonen Cross to 1772, and that the ecclesiastical dignitaries from Mar Thoma I to Mar Thoma VI were only 'Fake Hierarchs' calls for a more adequate defence than is offered by the author. This subject calls for a fuller treatment than is possible here.

The book is well got up and clearly readable. There are a number of printing errors, which need to be corrected in subsequent editions. In conclusion, it should be noted once again that the book deserves unreserved commendation in regard to its treatment of the main theme, namely the Juridical status of the Catholicos of Malabar, and I do warmly recommend it.

REV. DR. V. C. SAMUEL

V. C. SAMUEL, *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined*. A Historical and Theological Survey: Indian Theological Library No. 8, The Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1977, pp. xxii + 313, Price Rs. 21/-.

Modern ecumenical endeavours seem to have inspired fresh studies of the major points of dispute which divided the Church in the early centuries. This is especially evident in the emerging new relationship between the non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches (Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian and Indian) on the one hand and the pro-Chalcedonian Churches of both the Byzantine Orthodox and Latin Traditions on the other hand. They had parted company at the Council of Chalcedon 451. Since the weight of political power and numerical strength lay with the pro-Chalcedonian section of the Church, the controversial Council was easily interpreted in their favour by their theologians. The voice of the well-informed critics of the Council was systematically suppressed. As a result even reputed scholarship in the West used to propagate the idea that all those who opposed the Council of Chalcedon were confirmed "Monophysite" heretics who ignored the human nature in Christ and held that there was only one nature in him.

The present work of Dr. V. C. Samuel is a remarkable attempt to re-examine historically and theologically this traditional pro-Chalcedonian view of the Council in the light of original documents, the proceedings of the Council and the criticism of non-Chalcedonian theologians like Severus of Antioch, Timothy Aelurus, Philoxenos of Mabbogh etc. Being the fruit of more than 25 years of hard study, mature reflection and inter-Traditional dialogue, the arguments of the author deserve the serious attention of scholars who would like to have an objective view of what happened really at the Council of Chalcedon.

Dr. Samuel argues that the Council did not face up the real issues that lay unresolved in the conflict between the Antiochene and Alexandrine traditions. The Council of Chalcedon simply ignored the whole theological enterprise of Cyril of Alexandria and the Council of Ephesus 431, and began working on the assumption that the old monk Eutyches was a confirmed heretic and that Dioscorus the Patriarch of Alexandria was the real champion of the Eutychian heresy. But these assumptions had no factual basis and not even a slight attempt was made in the Council to examine these assumptions in any objective manner.

The author demonstrates that none of the accusations levelled against Dioscorus during the Council had any real theological significance, although he was condemned for the "heresy of Eutyches".

The political alliance between the old Rome and the imperial New Rome coupled with the tendentious manipulation of the Council by imperial commissioners clearly aimed at the humiliation of the see of Alexandria. The men who were excommunicated by the council of 449 were exonerated without any examination of the issue involved, and Dioscorus alone among the leaders who carried equal responsibility for that Council was brought to trial.

Christologically, the dynamic continuation of the two natures in Christ without confusion or division was not a point of dispute between Dioscorus and his accusers like Leo of Rome. But the Alexandrine had a definite tradition behind him of affirming how this dynamic continuation of natures could be expressed through the idea of hypostatic union and with the help of the expression "out of two natures". But in the Council there was no discussion of this Christological issue, and no body asked Dioscorus what his theological position was. The whole point of such theological issues was crushed with an arbitrary *causa finita est* on the authority of the Roman document of Pope Leo whose Christological insensitivity is now generally recognized by all scholars. The Council adopted as definition of faith the phrase "in two natures" in the face of clear opposition from the majority of council delegates. Dr. Samuel powerfully brings out a whole cluster of similar arbitrary procedures, on the part of the Council and demands a thorough re-examination of the Council in the light of evidence. He shows how even modern pro-Chalcedonian scholarship bungles over some of these key issues.

The author's intimate knowledge of the Syriac language and long familiarity with the writings of non-Chalcedonian theologians like Severus of Antioch have helped him to make an authoritative exposition of the theological stand of the critics of the Council. He cogently demonstrates that there is no trace of the so-called monophysitism in the non-Chalcedonian Christology, and "the use of the term cannot be admitted even as a convenient label with reference to the Eastern Churches which have refused to acknowledge the authority of Chalcedon, without showing on the strength of evidence that they held this view." Contrary to the general pro-Chalcedonian assumption that the opponents of the Council held the simple "one nature" (*monos + physis*) theory, Dr. Samuel shows the complexity and depth of the Alexandrine tradition in which "the one *incarnate* nature of God the Word" was a constitutive element. He takes care not to endorse any school or tradition without sufficient critical judgment. He appreciates the positive elements in the Antiochene traditions, and arrives at the conclusion that the Council of Chalcedon could not do justice even to the meritorious aspects of that tradition. The Antiochenes ignored it and the Alexandrines opposed it as it could not achieve anything theologically significant in their eyes.

The present work of Dr. Samuel is the first major attempt in modern times to re-examine the Council of Chalcedon in the light of the theological position of its critics and on the basis of a broad spectrum of issues that surrounded the Council. Some other modern scholars of non-Chalcedonian persuasion like Sarkissian and Nersoyan have also given us valuable insights into the anti-Chalcedonian position. But their work was limited by their particular concerns. Dr. Samuel has also attempted to relate the Christological significance of this 5th century controversy to the Indian Christian situation in which he lives. His Indian readers might wish if he could elaborate that further. A selected bibliography on the subject would have added to the academic quality of this brilliant work and would have helped future students.

—DR. K. M. GEORGE

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Sd/-

DR. K. M. GEORGE

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